

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3961

E. O. 11652: GDS

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S CALLS: B.V. PETROVSKIY

DEPARTMENT PASS HEW

1. I MADE INTRODUCTORY CALL MARCH 20 ON B.V. PETROVSKIY, USSR MINISTER OF HEALTH. FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER S.P. BURENKOV, CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT O.P. SHCHEPIN, AND DEPUTY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL SECTION A.K. KISELEV ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE FORTY-FIVE MINUTE MEETING. I TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSMIT TO PETROVSKIY THE LETTER OF INVITATION FROM SECRETARY WEINBERGER TO VISIT THE US IN OCTOBER. PETROVSKIY EXPRESSED GREAT GRATITUDE FOR INVITATION AND IMPLIED THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT FOR PROPOSED PERIOD BUT DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF. HE SAID THAT ALL THE SOVIETS WHO HAD MET SECRETARY WEINBERGER DURING VISIT TO USSR LAST YEAR HAD FOND MEMORIES OF THAT VISIT, WHICH HAD PRODUCED FAR GREATER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING THAN HAD EXISTED BEFORE. HE SAID CONTINUATION OF THESE RECIPROCAL VISITS IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE AND THAT WEINBERGER WAS WELCOME IN USSR AT ANY TIME. SPEAKING OF HIS OWN VISIT TO US IN 1972, PETROVSKIY SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY MEDICAL CENTER AT STANFORD AND WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT VISIT TO US.

2. PETROVSKIY ADMITTED THAT, WHEN 1972 HEALTH AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED, HE SIMPLY DID NOT EXPECT THAT SUCH A RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN US AND USSR WOULD FLOW FROM IT. HE SAID THAT HE WAS MORE THAN SATISFIED WITH PROGRESS AND HIGH ACTIVITY OF IMPLEMENTATION, AND STRESSED THAT RAPID

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SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS NECESSITATED FREQUENT CONTACT AND VISITS

FOR INFORMATION AND OPINION EXCHANGES, AS THEY NOW EXIST. HE NOTED THAT ARTHRITIS AND INFLUENZA HAVE BEEN ADDED TO ORIGINAL THREE AREAS PROVIDED FOR IN AGREEMENT AND THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD NOW CONCENTRATE ON DEEPENING COOPERATION IN THESE AREAS RATHER THAN EXPANDING INTO FURTHER NEW FIELDS. HE ALSO WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE LONG-TERM PERSONNEL EXCHANGES. IN PARTICULARLY, HE SUGGESTED THAT US AND USSR EXCHANGE SPECIALISTS IN NEAR FUTURE TO STUDY EACH OTHER'S ORGANIZATION OF HEALTH CARE. HE SAID SUCH SPECIALISTS COULD WORK IN HEALTH CENTERS IN LARGE AND SMALL CITIES, AND IN RURAL AREAS, TO OBTAIN OVERALL UNDERSTANDING.

3. PETROVSKIY SAID THAT FELDSHER SYSTEM IN USSR WAS IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES. SO-CALLED FELDSHERS IN U.S. ARE REALLY NOT SUFFICIENTLY QUALIFIED, HE ASSERTED, BECAUSE THEY RECEIVE ONLY 6-8 MONTHS TRAINING, COMPARED WITH THREE AND ONE-HALF YEARS TRAINING IN USSR.

4. PETROVSKIY SAID THAT MINISTRY OF HEALTH "OVERFULFILLED" ITS PLAN IN 1973 FOR SENDING TRAINED DOCTORS INTO RURAL AREAS. WHEREAS PLAN CALLED FOR 10,000 NEW DOCTORS IN SUCH AREAS, ACTUAL NUMBER WAS 11,000. IN GENERAL, THERE ARE 31 DOCTORS PER 10,000 POPULATION IN USSR, COMPARED WITH 16 FOR SAME NUMBER IN US. SOVIET GOALS CALL FOR 35 IN 1976 AND 38.2 IN 1985.

5. ON ORGAN TRANSPLANTS, PETROVSKIY WAS NOT VERY ENTHUSIASTIC, DESPITE FACT THAT HE PERSONALLY PERFORMED ONE OF FIRST SUCCESSFUL KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS IN USSR. HE SAID THAT TISSUE REJECTION WAS ONLY ONE PROBLEM CONNECTED WITH SUCH TRANSPLANTS, HE NOTED, IT IS NECESSARY TO USE A HEALTHY "LIVE" HEART FROM A "DEAD" DONOR, WHICH IS SEEMING CONTRADICTION. IF EEG SHOWS PATIENT DEAD, HEART SOMETIMES IS STILL PUMPING. HE ASKED WHETHER IN SUCH CASE HEART OR EEG SHOULD BE BELIEVED. HE SAID THAT FAVORED APPROACH WAS ARTIFICIAL ORGAN TECHNOLOGY, AND CITED SUCCESS OF ARTIFICIAL KIDNEYS AND GREAT POTENTIAL FOR ARTIFICIAL HEARTS. SOVIETS HAVE DEVELOPED ARTIFICIAL HEART THAT WILL SUSTAIN PATIENT FOR 30 HOURS, HE SAID.

6. IN CONCLUSION, WE AGREED THAT INCREASED AND EVEN MORE PRODUCTIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN US AND USSR IN HEALTH FIELD WOULD BENEFIT EVERYONE AND THAT WE WOULD BOTH WORK TOWARD THAT END.
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